

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action dated January 26, 2004, has been carefully considered.

Telephone interviews between the undersigned and Examiner Fan were conducted on May 17 and May 24, 2004. During the interview, the undersigned attempted unsuccessfully to persuade Examiner Fan that removal from Claim 1 of the language "means for producing synchronization signals" did not raise new issues requiring further consideration and/or search because it did not alter meaning of the claim that the means for producing synchronization signals able to control the interference suppression stage is the same means for producing synchronization signals able to control the decision means. This had been previously unclear to the examiner, who originally believed these were two separate means, but was then led by the amendment removing the above-quoted language to believe that they were one means. In fact, they are one and the same means, as is clear from a reading of the remainder of the claim and the specification. The present amendment is intended to clarify this without operating to limit the scope of the claim in any way. Further, the term "generation" has been replaced with the term "estimation" to maintain consistency with the specification. Again, this is merely intended to clarify the claim without limiting its scope.

Drawings:

FIGS. 6 and 7 have been corrected to include reference numerals 121, 122, and 123, which were inadvertently omitted from the corrections previously submitted. Also, the descriptive legends in these drawings have been reinstated.

Abstract:

The abstract has been amended to conform to U.S. patent practice. The Examiner's suggestions regarding the term "means" used therein have been implemented, said term being deleted as necessary. Other grammatical changes have been made.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement.

Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly recite functions of the synchronization signals at issue in the Office Action. These functions are 1) control of the interference suppression stages generally ("means" has been changed to "stages" to clarify this), and 2) control of the decision means of the final stage (ED). This is consistent with the written description and drawings. Specifically, with reference to FIG. 8, element 171 (or 172, or 173), which is described as a synchronization means (specification, page 11, lines 9-10), is depicted as providing control signals to the interference suppression means ESI_i, ESI_l (specification, page 11, lines 9-10) and to the decision means 151 (the rightmost arrow emanating from box 171 points to box 151, which is identified as the decision means on page 7, line 33—note that FIGS. 7 and 8 share some elements in common, as is commonly practiced, and as is clearly noted on page 11, lines 6-7, wherein it is stated that "Fig. 8 corresponds to fig. 7 and the same means carry the same references.").

Claim 1 further specifies, in a manner consistent with the remainder of the claim and the written specification and drawings, that "the means for producing the synchronization signals are

constituted by K means solely placed in the K channels of the final stage (ED)," (FIG. 8 depicts the means 171, 172, 172 for producing the synchronization signals within the broken-line box labeled ED), and that "the K synchronization signals produced by said K means [control] the K decision means of the K channels of the final stage (ED) and the interference estimation means of the K channels of the at least one interference suppression stages (ESI_i) following appropriate time shifts." The K decision means are means 151, 152, 153, described as such for example on page 7, line 33 (again it is noted that that FIGS. 7 and 8 share some elements in common, as is commonly practiced). The interference estimation means of the K channels of the at least one interference suppression stages correspond to boxes 111, 112 and 113, described as such on page 11, line 17, for example. Time shifts are provided by circuits 181, 182 and 183. These relationships are clearly depicted in FIG. 8, showing appropriate arrows emanating from box 171 and pointing to box 151 in the final stage ED, and further pointing, by way of box 181, to box 111 in interference suppression stage box ESI_i. Based on the foregoing, it is urged that Claims 1-3 are in compliance with the enablement requirements, and withdrawal of 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The changes to Claim 1 and 3 discussed above now more clearly and definitely set forth the elements of the claims, and withdrawal of the indefiniteness rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

Having addressed all outstanding rejections and objections, applicants respectfully urge that the application is now in condition for allowance. If a telephone call would expedite this process, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: May 25, 2004



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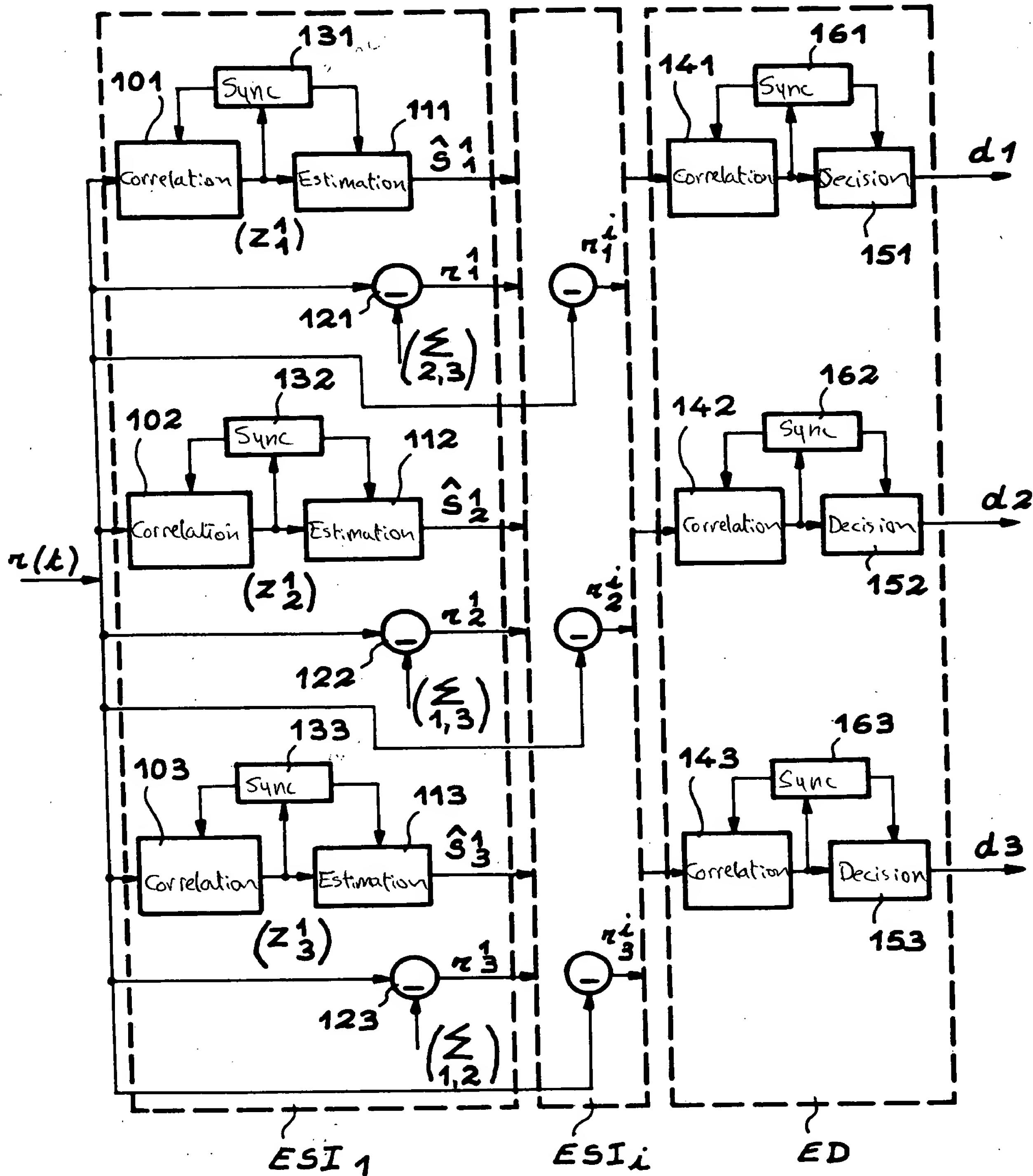
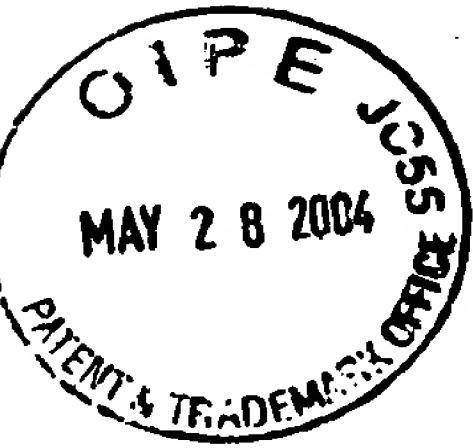


FIG. 7

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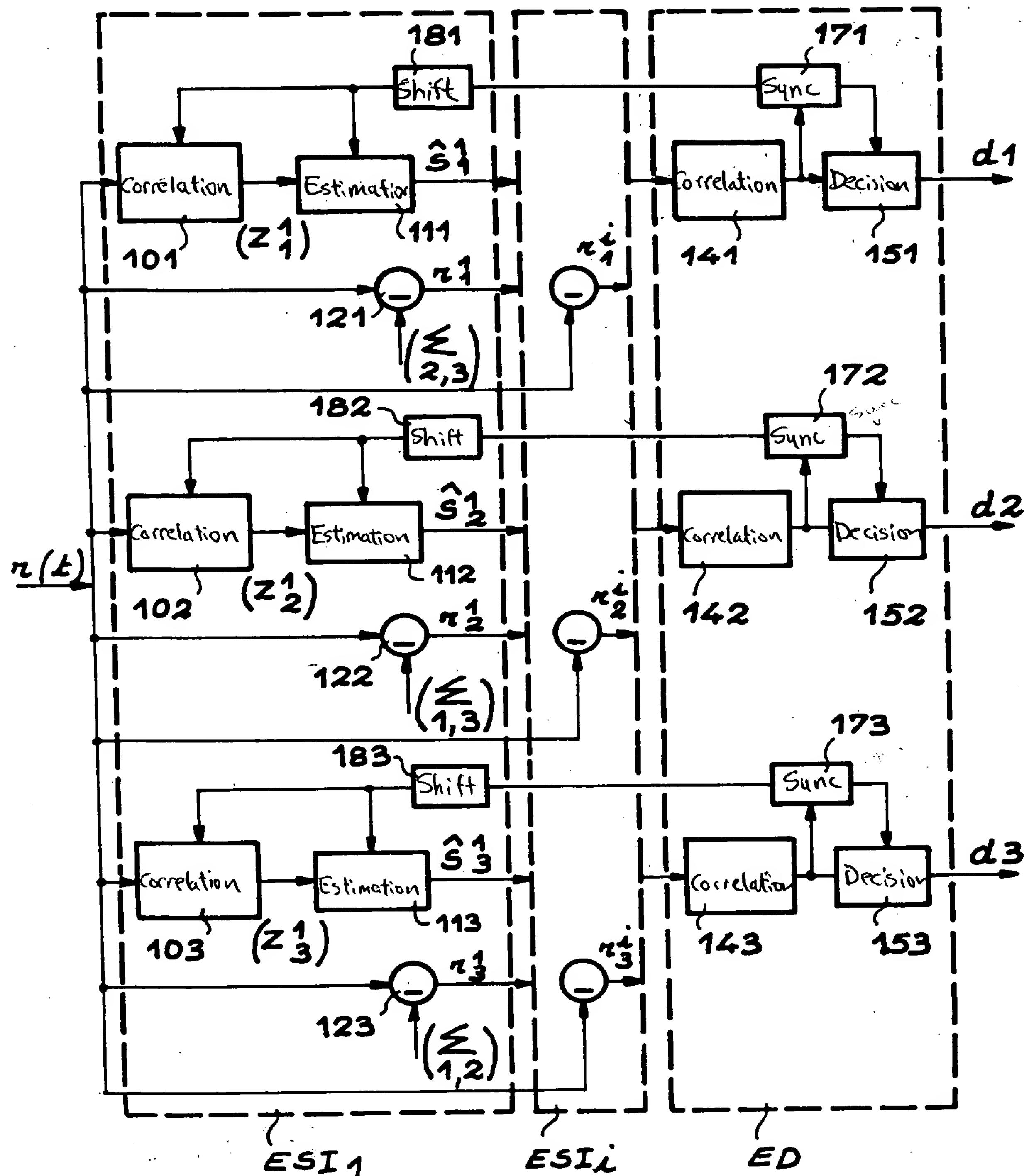


FIG. 8